



Bristol County District Attorney's Office  
C. Samuel Sutter, District Attorney



City of New Bedford  
Scott W. Lang, Mayor



New Bedford Police Department  
Ronald E. Teachman, Chief of Police

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## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **Mayor, District Attorney Announce New Bedford Gun Safety Exchange**

**New Bedford, Massachusetts-** The New Bedford Police Department, New Bedford Mayor Scott W. Lang and Bristol County District Attorney C. Samuel Sutter announced today they will sponsor a “New Bedford Gun Safety Exchange” in an effort to prevent gun violence and accidental shootings in the city of New Bedford. The New Bedford Police Department will be stationed at Buttonwood Park on Rockdale Avenue in a city-owned van from 9:00am–3:00pm on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> to collect guns and ammunition. Participants in the Gun Safety Exchange will receive a Domino’s Pizza Monster Combo gift certificate, a \$35 value, in exchange for their firearms.

Prior to exchanging a firearm, participants are asked to notify the New Bedford Police Department at (508) 991-6307. This important step will protect the participant from being prosecuted for illegal transportation of a firearm. All firearms should arrive to the exchange location unloaded. A police officer on site will collect the weapon from the participant’s vehicle. All types of firearms will be accepted and no one who turns in a weapon will be required to give their name. Police will also be on call to travel to the homes of individuals who wish to turn in a firearm but are uncomfortable or unable to transport it to the exchange location at Buttonwood Park.

Lang, Teachman and Sutter urge those who possess illegal firearms and those who no longer have a use for their legal firearms to seize this unique opportunity to turn in their weapons, without fear of arrest or prosecution. Although the event is occurring in New Bedford, residents from throughout the surrounding area are encouraged to also take part in the gun bring back program. During a similar event held in New Bedford in 2005, area residents turned in 42 firearms and 58 total items.

"This gun exchange is really about firearm safety awareness. I ask all responsible citizens who know of an illegal firearm, one that is not secure or is no longer wanted, to please notify the police department and turn in the gun through this program," said Mayor Lang.

District Attorney Sutter said the event is worthwhile because it not only encourages those with illegal guns to turn them over without consequence, but also takes away any chance that unused legal guns could be stolen from a home or business, and then used to injure someone. "Our office's mission is not just about incarceration. It's about prevention. And, what better way to prevent gun violence than to have people turn in their illegal or unwanted firearms," District Attorney Sutter said. "I know a similar program was held in Fall River, and I'd like to see this kind of program in all four of Bristol County's cities," he continued.

Chief Teachman said that the New Bedford Police Department is pleased to help sponsor this event, as it is an important component in their comprehensive effort to reduce gun violence. He encourages area residents who do not have a legitimate use for their guns to call the police and schedule the exchange. "Surrendering a gun may save two lives - the person who might be shot, and the shooter who could spend a lifetime in jail," said Teachman.

"As young people spend more time at home, and out of school, unsecured guns pose a greater risk to the community. So please, if you have a gun you don't want, or that is unsecured, turn it in, or lock it up. Your kids, your neighbors, your community depend on every citizen's commitment to safe gun ownership," said Nelson Hockert-Lotz, owner of Dominos Pizza and sponsor of the "Gun Safety Exchange."

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